



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
BUILDING AND SAFETY DIVISION

CONTRACTOR'S GUIDE TO GRADING IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The approved grading plans must be onsite at all times.

Inspection Request Policy: Call the local Building and Safety District Office at least 24 hours in advance to request an inspection. See "REQUIRED GRADING INSPECTIONS" on the following page. Include job address, type of inspection, requested date of inspection, contact name and telephone number.

Inspectors are available for phone calls and counter appointments between 8 and 9 am each day. You may call or come into the office at that time with general questions or to determine an approximate inspection time.

Expiration of Permit: Grading permits shall expire if work is not started within 180 days of permit issuance. Additionally, permits shall expire if the work is suspended or abandoned for a period of 180 days. *In order to prevent expiration of the grading permit, an inspection must take place at a minimum of once every 180 days (6 months).*

Working Hours: 6:30 am to 8 pm Monday through Saturday. Primary enforcement will be by the Sheriff. Please note that other agencies may require more restrictive working hours.

Right of Entry: The inspector shall have access to the site for the purpose of inspecting the work (J103.7.7). Anyone who interferes with the right of entry may be considered guilty of a misdemeanor.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CONSULTANTS

Permittee: The permittee must supervise the construction to ensure the work is being performed according to the approved plans. He/she must notify the consultants when a professional inspection is required. See "REQUIRED GRADING INSPECTIONS" on the following page. The permittee also acts as the coordinator between the consultants, the contractor and the local Building and Safety office (including the inspector and the plan checker). He/she must notify the inspector of any changes to the plan and coordinate the approval of those changes with the consultants. **In the event there is a change of Contractor of Record, Field Engineer, Design Engineer, Soils Engineer, Engineering Geologist, or Bonding Agency, the permittee shall notify the Building and Safety District Office and submit updated and completed Employment of Consultant forms.**

Each consulting engineer shall provide professional inspection within such engineer's area of technical specialty. The specific inspections required are outlined below.

Field Engineer: Routine field inspections and reports certifying the grading work is in compliance with the approved grading plans and all applicable ordinances and requirements. See *In-Grading Inspections* on the following page for specific instructions. If revised plans are required during the course of the work, they must be prepared by the design engineer.

Soils Engineer: Observation during grading and testing for required compaction. Specifically, the soils engineer must be present during preparation of the natural ground and placement and compaction of the fill to verify that such work is being performed in accordance with the approved plans. Revised recommendations during construction must be submitted to the permittee, the civil engineer, and the inspector or plan checker as needed.

Engineering Geologist: Inspection of the bedrock excavation to determine if conditions encountered are in conformance with the approved report. Revised recommendations during construction must be submitted to the soils engineer.

REQUIRED GRADING INSPECTIONS

Initial: When the site has been cleared of vegetation and unapproved fill and it has been scarified, benched or otherwise prepared for fill. *No fill shall have been placed prior to this inspection.* Measures (sandbags, slope protection, etc.) must be in place during the rainy season to prevent erosion on brushed areas.

Subdrains: Where required for fill slopes, subdrain inspection is required when the subdrain and outlet have been constructed and surveyed for line and grade, *prior to placement of backfill.*

Drainage Devices: For devices with reinforced concrete (swales, terrace drains, etc.), a rebar inspection is required prior to placement of concrete. Other drainage devices will be inspected for installation and function at Rough Grade inspection.

In-Grading Inspections:

- **Field Engineer:** Per LACBC Section J105, unless otherwise directed by the Building Official, the Field Engineer must prepare and submit routine inspection reports with the Building Official as follows:
 1. Bi-weekly during all times when grading of 400 cubic yards or more per week is occurring on the site;
 2. Monthly, at all other times; and
 3. At any time when requested in writing by the Building Official.

These reports will certify to the Building Official that the Field Engineer has inspected the grading site and related activities and has found them in compliance with the approved grading plans and specifications, the building code, all grading permit conditions, and all other applicable ordinances and requirements. The reports must conform to the standard "Report of Grading Activities" form, which is included in this package or may be obtained by visiting <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/bsd/dg/default.aspx>. Failure to submit the required reports may result in a Stop-Work Notice to be issued by the Building Official.

- **Soils Engineer:** Per LACBC Section J105, the soils engineer or field technician shall provide professional inspection including observation during grading and testing for required compaction. The technician must provide inspections during the preparation of the natural ground and the placement and compaction of the fill and verify the work is being done in accordance with the approved plans. In addition, a representative shall be onsite for the *entire* fill placement and compaction for all fill slopes 30' high/deep and over, or for slopes with grades steeper than 2:1. The soil must be tested to determine the density and verify compliance of the soil properties with the design requirements, including soil type and shear strength. In-progress reports (typically monthly reports) must be submitted for review. Failure to submit the required reports may result in a Stop-Work Notice to be issued by the Building Official.

Submit in-progress reports:

- ☐ Directly to your inspector for review.
- ☐ To Geotechnical & Materials Engineering Division and the District Office for review.

Revisions: The inspector must be notified of all plan revisions. Contact the inspector through his/her voicemail or the Inspection Request Line to inform him/her of the proposed revision. When a substantial design change is proposed, the inspector may request the grading plan checker to review and approve the revision. It is the responsibility of the Permittee to process the revision with the plan checker. Additional plan check fees may be incurred for this review time.

Two weeks prior to the final grading inspection, and "As-Built" plan must be submitted to the inspector. The As-Built must incorporate all minor field changes (approved by the inspector in the field) and major plan revisions (approved by the plan checker). Failure to obtain approvals for plan revisions and failure to submit As-Built plan may result in delays in obtaining grading approval, Certificate of Occupancy, and release of grading bond.

Rough: When approximate final elevations have been established. All drainage devices necessary for the protection of the building site from flooding must be installed and functional. The building pad must drain properly, and berms must be installed at the top of all fill slopes. In addition, the Engineered Grading Consultant Statement and Contractor Statement for rough grading must be submitted. *Original documents are required. Copies and*

faxes will not be accepted. Several other agency approvals may be required prior to rough grade approval, including: Geotechnical & Materials Engineering Division approval, Construction Division approval of street and storm drain improvements, and Land Development Division approval of Landscape & Irrigation plans.

Final: When grading has been completed, all drainage devices necessary to drain the building pad are installed, slope planting is established and irrigation systems are installed. If applicable, all treatment devices must be installed and stenciled with “No Dumping – Drains to Ocean” stencil” for SUSMP compliance. The Engineered Grading Consultant Statement and Contractor Statement for final grading must be submitted. *Original documents are required. Copies and faxes will not be accepted.* If required, all encroachment and connection permits must have final sign off from Construction Division. The Certificate of Occupancy for the structure will not be issued and the grading bond (if required) will not be released until Final Grading is approved.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS DURING GRADING

Erosion Control: During the rainy season of October 15 to April 15, measures must be taken to ensure a clean construction site. Best Management Practices (BMPs) must be in place in accordance with the approved Erosion Control plan. Failure to comply will result in a “Stop Work Notice”. The *Developer/Contractor Self-Inspection Form* must be onsite at all times. BMPs must be inspected routinely and before and after major storms events, and repaired as needed. BMPs must be installed to protect adjacent property, road right-of-ways, storm drains, and water courses from sediment transport. The Erosion Control Plan must be updated as needed during construction to reflect current site conditions.

In addition, if the site is over 1 acre, a Local Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan is required. Year-round measures for waste management must be in place at all times at the site. This includes proper waste management, stabilized construction entrance, materials pollution control, and other non-stormwater measures such as dewatering.

Elevation Certificates: If required, the elevation certificate must be completed by a Licensed Land Surveyor, Civil Engineer, or Architect authorized by law to certify elevation information.

In general, for slab-on-grade construction in which the top of slab elevation must be above the base flood elevation, the elevation certificate must be submitted and approved by the plan checker prior to framing. This may vary depending on the building diagram. Contact the surveyor of record or the plan checker for more site-specific instructions.

Hazards: The inspector may issue a written “Stop Work Order” at any stage of construction if he/she determines that the approved grading is likely to endanger any public or private property. The inspector will allow the work to continue once he/she feels adequate safety precautions or corrective measures have been taken.